

**One of these children  
has amblyopia.**

**Your child could too.**



# Amblyopia

## What is Amblyopia?

- Amblyopia is reduced vision.
- It is caused when the brain ignores one eye.
- Some people call it "lazy eye".
- The eyes may look OK.
- The child may appear to see fine.
- If an eye is not focused, it may get amblyopia.
- If an eye is crossed in or turned out, it may get amblyopia.
- Amblyopia must be treated or vision will be lost permanently.
- Early testing can find which children have amblyopia.
- Treatment can restore full vision if it is started early.
- Any child can have amblyopia.



**Rod Blagojevich**  
*Governor*

**Patricia Blagojevich**  
*First Lady of Illinois*

In Cooperation With:

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services  
Illinois Department of Human Services  
Illinois Department of Public Aid  
Illinois Department of Public Health  
Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois Optometric Association  
Illinois Association of Ophthalmology  
Illinois Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics  
Illinois Pediatric Vision Fund

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# Is Your



# Child's Vision



# Sharp and Clear



# In Both Eyes?



**Dear Parents:**

*We are deeply committed to promoting the health and well-being of the children of this state. An important part of that commitment is making sure that we do everything we can to support good vision and eye health.*

*One of the most serious and most common threats to children's vision is amblyopia, also known as "lazy eye." Amblyopia affects 2 to 3 of every 100 children. When detected early, amblyopia can usually be treated successfully. But without treatment, the condition can cause permanent vision loss.*

*In this brochure, you will learn about what you and your family can do to protect your child's vision from deteriorating as a result of amblyopia and other eye disorders.*

*We are pleased to have you join us in this important mission.*

*Sincerely,*

  
**Rod Blagojevich**  
Governor

  
**Patricia Blagojevich**  
First Lady



## **Every Child's Vision Should Be Tested Regularly.**

Your doctor should examine your child's eyes on every routine visit.

- The exam may be as simple as shining a light in both eyes at the same time.
- The doctor may check whether each eye can follow a moving toy.
- At least once before age 5, the vision should be tested formally:
  - Depth perception is tested with special glasses;
  - Vision is checked with pictures or letters.
- The sooner a problem is found, the easier it is to treat!

## **When Should My Child's Eyes Be Tested By an Eye Doctor?**

- If a brother or sister has amblyopia or other eye problems.
- If an eye appears to be crossing.
- If you observe squinting or head tilting.
- If the "red eye" reflection in pictures is not the same in both eyes.
- If your child has an eyelid that droops down.
- If your child has trouble walking, often trips or bumps in to things.
- If your family doctor has difficulty checking your child's eyes.

**Don't wait--  
have your child's vision  
tested!**

## **What Questions Should I Ask The Doctor?**

- Is there a problem with my child's eyes?
- Are both of my child's eyes working right?
- Can each of my child's eyes see as well as the other?

## **How is Amblyopia Treated?**

- Amblyopia is treated by making the "weaker eye" work harder.
- To do this, your child's eye doctor may:
  - Ask you to get glasses for your child;
  - Give you eye drops to put in the **good** eye;
  - Ask you to have your child wear a patch over the **good** eye, or other treatment;
  - Ask you to bring your child back to monitor his or her progress.
- Treatment for amblyopia is best when started before your child is five years old. After that, vision in the eye that doesn't see clearly may never fully develop.

## **How Can I Find an Eye Doctor?**

- An eye doctor may be either an Ophthalmologist (M.D.) or an Optometrist (O.D.).
- If you need help finding an eye doctor for your child's eyes, ask your child's regular doctor.
- Many county health departments offer eye tests for children who are more than three years old.
- Call 1-866-4-OUR-KIDS [1-866-468-7543] (Voice) or 1-877-204-1012 (TTY) for information about KidCare, the State of Illinois' health insurance program for children.
- For general information, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health's Vision and Hearing Program toll-free at 1-800-545-2200 (Voice) or 1-800-547-0466 (TTY).